DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 308 375 CE 052 798

TITLE	How Are We Doing? A Brief Guide to the Evaluation of School-Business Partnerships.
INSTITUTION	Massachusetts State Dept. of Education, Quincy. Office of Community Education.
PUB DATE	88
NOTE	12p.; Developed by the Extended Committee for Industry-Education Partnerships.
AVAILABLE FROM	Office of Community Education, Massachusetts Dept. of Education, 1385 Hancock Street, Quincy, MA 02169.
PUB TYPE	Guides - Non-Classroom Use (055)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Accountability; Cooperative Programs; Elementary Secondary Education; Program Effectiveness; *Program Evaluation; *School Business Relationship; *School Community Programs; School Community Relationship; *Self Evaluation (Groups)

ABSTRACT

This pamphlet suggests what to evaluate in a school-business partnership, how to evaluate it, and how to determine whether a partnership has made a difference. The section called "Why Evaluate?" lists six questions to which evaluation frequently yields the answers. The next section explains the purpose of four steps in preparing to evaluate (review the mission and goals of the partnership and the objectives of the project, determine the purposes to which the evaluative information will be put, identify measures of achievement that can be correlated with each goal, and develop an evaluation plan) and also speaks briefly of a more formal, quantitative approach to evaluation. The next section lists 20 items that have been part of formal and informal partnership evaluations and also suggests six less quantifiable factors that can be assessed. A section on evaluation methods suggests four activities (regular meetings at which partnership programs are reviewed and redirected as necessary, surveys with the various constituencies in the partnership, interviews with those same constituencies, and direct observations of the effectiveness of programs). Third-party, or external, evaluations are also mentioned. The section on reports to the partners discusses with whom the evaluation information should be shared. Three descriptions of program evaluations appear in the section called "Evaluation at Work." The pamphlet concludes with a list of nine resources. (CML)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED308375

HOW ARE WE DOING?

A BRIEF GUIDE TO THE EVALUATION OF SCHOOL-BUSINESS PARTNERSHIPS

Developed by Extended Committee for Industry-Education Partnerships

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

✓ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

B Ashkenas

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

Produced by
Office of Community Education
Massachusetts Department of Education
Winter, 1988

ED352798

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

MASSACHUSETTS BOARD OF EDUCATION

James F. Crain, Gloucester, *Chairperson*
Joseph E. Killory, Sandwich, *Vice Chairperson*

Raquel Bauman, Holden
James R. Grande, Hanover
Sol Kolack, Newton
Anne S. Larkin, Bedford
Melissa M. McNally, Cambridge
Theodora A. Sylvester, Springfield
Frances M. Turner, South Egremont
Mary C. Wright, Falmouth

Harold Raynolds, Jr., *Commissioner of Education, Secretary*

Franklyn G. Jenifer, *Chancellor*, Board of Regents, Ex Officio

Community Education Office
Susan Freedman, *Director*
Barbara Aschheim, *Community Education Specialist*

Produced by the Bureau of Operational Support
Cecilia DiBella, *Director*
Susan Gardner, *Publications/Communications Coordinator*
Susan M. Stille, *Typographist*

The Massachusetts Department of Education insures equal employment/educational opportunities/affirmative action regardless of race, color, creed, national origin or sex, in compliance with Title VI and Title IX, or handicap, in compliance with section 504.

PUBLICATION OF THIS DOCUMENT APPROVED BY RIC MURPHY, STATE PURCHASING AGENT

5m - 2/88 - 80261

est. cost $.18

INTRODUCTION

School-business partnerships have proven to be very effective means of strengthening schools and building collaborative relationships between schools and their communities. These partnerships are helping to expand the educational experiences that schools are able to provide and involving the business community in schools' instruction and decision making.

Partnerships come in a wide array of shapes, sizes, and forms. As these industry-education collaborations have grown in recent years, many participants and observers are asking how partnerships can—and should—be evaluated. This pamphlet provides suggestions on what to evaluate in a partnership, how to use this information, and how to determine if a partnership has "made a difference."

WHY EVALUATE?

Educators and business people who have experience with partnerships differ on the value of evaluation. Some partnership participants feel that their ongoing communication enables them to assess the effectiveness of their partnership programming and to make changes as necessary. They engage in a continuous informal process of partnership oversight that is a part of the partnership's planning.

Others take a more formal approach and want periodic and yearly reports on the achievements of the partnership in order to strengthen or redirect it as appropriate. They are interested in quantitative and qualitative data on the impact, "costs and benefits," and efficiency of the partnership.

Both informal and formal methods of assessment, whether or not they are called "evaluation," are vehicles for taking the pulse of the relationship, determining its effectiveness, and sharing its achievements. Regardless of the form they take, these assessments generally yield answers to some or all of the following questions:

- What are the costs and benefits of the partnership activities?
- Has the investment of the partners' time, talent, and resources been worthwhile?
- Which efforts of the partnership have been the most effective?
- What problem areas have arisen for the partnership?
- What can the partnership learn from its past experience that will be helpful in planning future partnership activities?
- In what ways is the past year's experience instructive as the partnership:
  - determines programs to add, delete, or change in the following year
  - builds enthusiasm for new partnership activities
  - publicizes its accomplishments
  - solicits community support of the partnership

Formal, and sometimes informal, evaluation also can provide data on the partnership's impact that can be used in reports that are disseminated to the partnership participants. In some communities, project supporters and potential partners use this information to determine the level of contribution they will make in subsequent years to the partnership. In addition,effective programming can be used as a public relations tool to generate continued or additional support of the partnership from many sectors of the community.

The knowledge gained through formally or informally discussing and analyzing the information that emerges from reviewing the previous year's activity provides the building blocks for the following years. Partnerships that take the time to look thoughtfully at the past will be working to strengthen their future.

PREPARING TO EVALUATE

There are many methods and philosophies of evaluation. No single method could possibly be appropriate for the broad range of partnerships that exist and for the differing sets of expectations that surround these partnerships. Working together, representatives from schools, such as administrators, teachers, and students, and individuals from the businesses and community organizations involved should discuss the style and extent of evaluation that will best suit their purposes.

Some partnerships have chosen to make evaluation an integral part of the earliest planning stages of the partners' projects. Goals are set for each aspect of the partnerships' activities and objectives are described in terms of their desired outcomes. In this way, evaluation becomes an intimate part of the process of planning for and implementing the partnerships' programming.

The partnership team, or the individuals with the responsibility for partnership evaluation, may want to consider the following steps in deciding how to go about evaluation:

- **Review the mission and goals** of the partnership and the objectives of individual partnership projects to determine "what business" you are in. Assessment should be tied to these goals and objectives and not to laudable—but unrelated—educational aspirations.
- **Determine the purposes** to which you will put the information that is gathered. These purposes could include reports to the community, feedback to partnership planners and participants, public relations for the schools and businesses involved, and a range of other appropriate uses of the data. Evaluation is a worthwhile activity when it helps to explain the past, contributes to understanding and appreciation of the present, and generates plans for the future. Evaluations that are used as planning and learning tools by the participants are worth the time and energy that goes into implementing them.

- **Identify appropriate measures** of achievement that can be correlated with each goal. For some partnerships these measures may mean the number of students who participated or the number of businesses that donated time to the school. Other partnerships may take a more "bottom line" approach and determine the hours given to the school by business people and the "value added" to the school by this activity. Still other programs may attempt to determine the reduction in student absenteeism or the increased scores on standardized tests.

- **Develop an evaluation plan.** For partnerships that take a more **informal** approach to evaluation, the "evaluation plan" may resemble a "report and discussion" on a meeting agenda. This type of evaluation generally solicits reflection and opinion on the effectiveness of the partnership and on areas for expansion, deletion, or other forms of change. This follow-up and review is very common in partnerships and seldom viewed as evaluation. It does, however, serve the important purpose of encouraging the partnership participants to take stock of their strengths and weaknesses and to plan for the future.

Other partnerships engage in a more **formal,** quantitative approach in their evaluation. They gather the appropriate facts and figures and subject them to analyses that can indicate specific strengths and weaknesses in their programs. This form of analysis can be very helpful in programs with many components that are attempting to reach large numbers of students, teachers, and businesses. The danger in subjecting industry-education partnerships to this kind of analysis is that there may be factors that indicate partnership effectiveness that do not appear in the frequency or distribution charts. Partnership members are encouraged to keep in perspective all of the elements of the partnership and the "non-quantifiables" that may have made a significant impact on the schools or the community.

WHAT TO EVALUATE

Equally successful partnerships in adjoining communities may differ on the elements that they are interested in assessing in their partnerships. Equipment donated? Improved teacher morale? Student participation in programs? These determinations must be made by individual partnerships, depending upon their own goals, situations, etc. The following items have been part of formal and informal evaluations in a range of partnerships:

- numbers of students who participated in partnership programs
- distribution of students across offered programs
- numbers of teachers who participated in partnership programs designed for teachers
- numbers of businesses that participated in the partnership programs
- hours donated by business people

- number of business sites visited by students
- dollar value of guest speakers, business "tutors," workshops presented to teachers by business people, etc.
- dollar value of equipment and materials contributed by businesses
- numbers of businesses that hosted field trips, internships, shadowing experiences, etc.
- number of articles in local press on partnership activities
- value of in-kind contributions by businesses (printing, incentive awards for students, public relations, etc.)
- measures of teacher/student/parent morale
- numbers of parents involved in partnership activities
- improvement in attendance
- reduction in dropout rate
- changes in standardized test scores
- number of students going on to college/work after high school
- number of administrators who attend partnerships meetings
- attendance at partnership's advisory committee meetings
- number of advisory/planning committee meetings

Partnerships also look at less quantifiable factors as they assess their achievements and effectiveness. The following ideas may be helpful to your partnership:

- Are school officials, including the superintendent, supportive of the partnership? What are the indicators of this support?
- Has there been a pattern of growth in the programs offered or in the areas of concern of the partnership?
- Do the partners believe that their investment of time and effort has been worthwhile? What indicators exist to demonstrate their attitudes toward the partnership?
- Do the partners periodically reexamine their vision or long-range plans for the partnership?
- Are steps taken to ensure that burnout does not occur for participants?
- What steps are taken to continually reinvigorate the partnership?
- What anecdotes are helpful in demonstrating the impact and value of the partnership's activities?

EVALUATION METHODS

We have indicated that there are many different modes of evaluation that have been used to respond to individual partners' needs. These range from very informal assessments of "How are we doing?" to careful analyses of the cost-benefit ratios that result from the resources that have been put into the partnership. The following suggestions represent a range of possibilities that may "fit" with the needs of newer and more established school-business partnerships:

- Regular meetings at which partnership programs are reviewed, discussed, and redirected as necessary
- Surveys or questionnaires to partnership constituencies (students, teachers, administrators, parents, business partners, community representatives, etc.) to determine their assessment of the partnership's effectiveness and value

- Interviews with the several constituencies involved in the partnership
- Direct observation of the effectiveness and success of programs

The approaches described above all depend on "self-evaluation" of the partnership. Some programs may choose to invite an external party to review and critique the partnership. This mode of evaluation may take the form of a consultation in which a partnership specialist offers suggestions for change or growth based on an assessment of the current health of the relationship. Other modes of evaluation by "third party evaluators" include comparisons with other partnerships on a range of criteria, "grading" or ranking the partnership, and measuring the program against a set of baseline indicators. This third party approach can be very effective in helping a partnership renew, expand, or redirect its programming.

REPORTS TO THE PARTNERS

It is in the best interest of partnerships to report to their constituencies on the effectiveness and accomplishments of the partnership. Many of the participants and the "publics" of partnerships will expect a report and will respond positively to this measure of accountability.

These reports may be made at intervals during the school year or at the end of the year and should be shared with school committees and administrators, teachers, parents, students, business people, and others in the community who would be interested. Some partnerships have also shared their reports with the state department of education, legislators, and others who oversee education in the state.

These reports can be used for several purposes in addition to documenting partnerships' successes:

- to share information on the partnership's progress and plans for the future
- to indicate responsiveness to the partners
- to solicit the support of new business and community partners
- to expand participation by the schools
- to provide publicity and recognition for the participants
- to highlight programs in the schools through the partnership
- to highlight the contributions of the partnership to the goals of the schools
- to solicit inquiries about and further contributions to the partnership

EVALUATION AT WORK

Formal Evaluation

Dorchester High School/New England Telephone Partnership
Dorchester High School and New England Telephone, in Boston, Massachusetts, have been engaged in partnership activities for 18 years. In recent years, this partnership has expanded its projects and introduced short and long range planning into its yearly goal setting activity. Representatives of New England Telephone and of Dorchester High School review data that reflects the educational, motivational, and social needs of the school and the effectiveness of previous years' partnership programs and approaches. This information is gathered through objective data, such as comparative testing results within the Boston schools, attendance records, and the worksite and higher education placement record of graduating seniors. It is also obtained through meetings with parents, students, guidance counselors, teachers, and administrators, and from representatives of New England Telephone and other community agencies with which the school works.

Evaluation is a "living" tool which allows this partnership to guage its effectiveness and target areas in which it needs to concentrate its activity. The report to the community on the partnership serves to highlight the successes of the partnership, the company and school personnel who helped to make them a reality, and the improvement that is taking place at Dorchester High School. For this partnership, evaluation is an important part of the strategy for building community support for its school.

Informal Evaluation

A. Peabody Educational Council
The Peabody Educational Council was organized in 1985 to improve Peabody's educational system. This Council, which is composed of school system personnel and local business people, has developed three projects: a mini-grants program for teachers; a community speaker's program; and a job opportunity program that prepares students to enter the workforce.

As a new partnership that is exploring ways in which it can best meet the needs of the school while realistically requesting assistance from the business community, the Council has expanded, improved, and modified its projects continually in its few years of existence. Using input from the schools and the community, its own observation of the effectiveness of project components, and evaluation forms that are distributed to all program participants, Council members have reassessed aspects of their program and made improvements that were responsive to the information they gathered.

This sensitivity to the impact of its programs and recognition of the need to engage in ongoing assessment has enabled the partnership to remain vital, realistic, and relevant. The Council has enjoyed increased participation in its programs each year and has learned to expand its ability to communicate and collaborate with the schools in a meaningful and results-oriented manner.

B. Worcester School-Business Partnership

The Worcester School-Business Partnership provides systematic and comprehensive career awareness and exploration programs for students in grades 7-12. This partnership has been in existence since 1982 and has undergone several changes in structure over the years. Piloted initially in one high school, it has expanded to all eight Worcester High Schools and Middle Schools.

This partnership has used a mix of evaluation methods in order to oversee the effectiveness of its programs and to assess the attitudes of the business people on which it relies heavily. The partnership coordinators remain in frequent contact with the school personnel in each building and with the business "hosts" who are paired with each school. This informal contact allows potential problems to be addressed and provides information on the receptivity and implementation of the partnership on a regular basis. School and business partners also meet at least once a year to assess the strengths and weaknesses of individual programs and to suggest new directions for the partnership.

The partnership reports on its programs in an annual report and in the partnership newspaper of the Alliance for Education, a Worcester area agency that promotes school-community partnerships. The blend of informal communication and yearly meetings of this complex partnership has provided it with effective and efficient methods for evaluating its impact on the school and business communities and for informing its publics of its achievements.

RESOURCES ON EVALUATION

Community Education Resource Guide. Alabama State Department of Education, 817 South Court Street, Suite 204, Montgomery, Alabama 36104, 1980.
This comprehensive guide to school-community partnerships includes techniques on evaluation and sample evaluation forms.

Company-School Collaboration: A Manual for Developing Successful Projects. Education Services, American Council of Life Insurance, 1850 K Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20006.
A complete and valuable guide to partnership development.

Determining the Costs and Benefits of Community Education Programs: Handbook for Local Practitioners. Howard Fleischman, Paul Hopstock, and Malcolm Young, Development Associates, Inc., 2924 Columbia Pike, Arlington, VA 22204, 1983.
This handbook assists local practitioners in using cost-benefit analysis in determining the need for and worth of their programs. It provides a model for assessment that educators and others can adapt to their specific school-community partnerships.

Doing Your Community Education Evaluation: A Guide. Malcolm Young, Gerald Hanberry, George Wood, Jr., David Santellanes, and Keith Rogers, U.S. Office of Education, Washington, D.C., 1980.
A guide to using a set of directions for assessing school-community collaboration.

Handbook for Impact Evaluation of Community Education. Christopher Wilson and Bonnie Faddis, San Diego County Office of Education, 6401 Linda Vista Road, San Diego, CA 92111-7399, 1983.
This handbook provides a process for examining the impact of a community school. The criteria and steps recommended provide a model that can be adapted to school-business partnerships.

Hip Pocket Guide to Planning and Evaluation. Dorothy B. Craig, 1978, University Associates, Inc., P.O. Box 26240, San Diego, CA 92126.
A comprehensive and readable guide to evaluation.

Industry-Education Partnership Guidelines. Massachusetts Department of Education, 1985.
A step-by-step guide to initiating and maintaining a school-business partnership.

School Partnerships Handbook. Susan D. Otterbourg, Ed.D., Prentice Hall, Inc., Engelwood Cliffs, N.J., 1986.
A comprehensive guide to establishing and implementing school-business partnership.

School Volunteer Programs. National School Volunteer Program, Inc., 300 North Washington Street, Alexandria, Virginia 22314, 1981.
This handbook for initiating and developing school volunteer programs includes a section on evaluation that includes assessment questions for school volunteers and for teachers.

EXTENDED COMMITTEE FOR INDUSTRY-EDUCATION PARTNERSHIPS

John Rennie, *Extended Committee Chairperson*
President
Pacer Systems, Inc.

S. Paul Reville, *Evaluation Subcommittee Chairperson*
Executive Vice-President
Alliance for Education

Robert Buzzell
Professor
Harvard Business School

Joan Duff
Manager/Community Relations
Honeywell Bull

Michelle Flaherty
President
Metrowest Chamber of Commerce

David Flynn
Superintendent
Marlboro Public Schools

Howard Greis
President
Kinefac Corporation

Bruce Hainsworth
Assistant to the Chairman
The Foxboro Company

Maureen Johnson
Director
Resource Center for Business
Salem State College

Al Kountze
District Manager
Public Relations
New England Telephone

Palmer Swanson
Director, Public Affairs
Polaroid Corporation

Helaine Sweet
Supervisor
Springfield School Volunteers, Inc.